

I Claim:

1. A composition useful to prevent iron deficiency anemia comprising micro-encapsulated iron granules in combination with a lipid-based excipient.
2. A composition as defined in claim 1, wherein said composition additionally comprises a bio-available form of ascorbic acid.
3. A composition as defined in claim 1, wherein said composition additionally comprises a bio-available form of a micronutrient selected from the group consisting of zinc, vitamin A and iodine.
4. A composition as defined in claim 1, wherein the iron granules are no more than about 850 microns in diameter.
5. A composition as defined in claim 1, wherein the iron granules are encapsulated with a coating, said coating being prepared from a compound selected from the group consisting of monoglycerides, diglycerides, ethyl cellulose, hydrogenated soybean oil and mixtures thereof.
6. A composition as defined in claim 1, wherein said excipient is an edible oil in hydrogenated form.
7. A method for preventing iron deficiency anemia in a mammal comprising the steps of:
 - a) adding a therapeutically effective amount of a composition comprising micro-encapsulated iron granules and a lipid-based excipient to a food; and
 - b) administering the food to said mammal.
8. A method as defined in claim 7, wherein the food is selected from the group consisting of a semi-solid or pureed food and a milk-based food product.

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9. A method as defined in claim 7, wherein said therapeutically effective amount comprises about 10 – 25 mg of elemental iron.

10. A method as defined in claim 7, wherein the composition additionally comprises ascorbic acid.

11. A method as defined in claim 7, wherein the excipient is an edible oil in hydrogenated form.

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12. An article of manufacture comprising packaging material and a pharmaceutical composition contained within said packaging material, wherein said pharmaceutical composition is therapeutically effective to prevent iron deficiency anemia, and wherein the packaging material comprises a label which indicates that the composition comprises iron and that iron ingestion is effective to prevent iron deficiency anemia, said composition comprising a therapeutically effective amount of micro-encapsulated iron granules in combination with a lipid-based excipient.

13. An article of manufacture as defined in claim 12, wherein said therapeutically effective amount of micro-encapsulated iron is in the range of about 10 – 17 mg.

14. An article of manufacture as defined in claim 12, wherein the composition additionally comprises ascorbic acid.

15. An article of manufacture as defined in claim 12, wherein the composition additionally comprises a bioavailable form of a compound selected from zinc, vitamin A and iodine.

16. An article of manufacture as defined in claim 12, wherein the excipient is an edible oil in hydrogenated form.

17 An article of manufacture as defined in claim 12, wherein said packaging material
contains a single daily dosage of said composition.

18. ~~An article of manufacture as defined in claim 17, wherein said packaging material is in the form of a sachet.~~

19. An article of manufacture comprising packaging material and a pharmaceutical composition contained within said packaging material, wherein said pharmaceutical composition is therapeutically effective to prevent iron deficiency anemia, and wherein the packaging material comprises a label which indicates that the composition can be used to prevent iron deficiency anemia, said composition comprising a therapeutically effective amount of micro-encapsulated iron granules in combination with a lipid-based excipient.

20. An article of manufacture as defined in claim 19, wherein said composition additionally comprises ascorbic acid.

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